

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINSHA 01633 241515Z

53

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 1633

DEPT PASS TO THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, OVIP (ROBINSON, CHARLES W.)

SUBJECT: UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON'S VISIT TO ZAIRE

1. UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT POATS, AND NSC STAFF MEMBER HORMATS, VISITED ZAIRE FEBRUARY 20-24. FROM THE BEGINNING, WHEN THE GOZ WAS FIRST INFORMED OF THE VISIT, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE ZAIRIANS WERE DELIGHTED AT THE PROSPECTS OF RECEIVING A HIGH-RANKING AMERICAN DELEGATION, AND THAT THEY INTENDED TO PLAY IT FOR ALL THAT IT WAS WORTH. THE IMPORTANCE THE GOZ ACCORDED THE ROBINSON VISIT WAS REFLECTED IN VERY HEAVY AND FAVORABLE PRESS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE. (SEE SEPTTEL). THE BASIC MESSAGE THAT WAS PUT FORTH BOTH TO THE ZAIRIAN POPULACE AND OTHER AFRICAN STATES WAS THAT THE USG HAD RECOGNIZED THE SEVERE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PROBLEM WHICH ZAIRE IS FACING--IN PART DUE TO EVENTS IN ANGOLA-- AND THAT THE AMERICANS WERE PREPARED TO HELP.

2. UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON'S SCHEDULE WAS FILLED WITH MEETINGS WITH KEY ZAIRIAN DECISION MAKERS AND VISITS TO MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 21, HE MET WITH THE NUMBER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINSHA 01633 241515Z

TWO MAN IN THE GOZ, BISENGIMANA, AND THE STABILIZATION COMMISSION

(MINISTERS OF FINANCE, PORTFOLIO AND THE GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK). THAT SESSION WAS MAINLY DEVOTED TO A BRIEFING BY THE STABILIZATION COMMISSION OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE MEASURES WHICH THE GOZ IS TAKING AS PART OF THE IMF REFORM PROGRAM. IN THE AFTERNOON, THE UNDERSECRETARY MET AGAIN WITH THE STABILIZATION COMMISSION TO POSE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AIMED AT IDENTIFYING THE MAGNITUDE OF THE 1976 DEFICIT AND THE KINDS OF ASSISTANCE ZAIRE WOULD REQUIRE. IN THE EVENING, THE UNDERSECRETARY MET WITH THE SMTF REP AND WENT OVER THE WAYS IN WHICH THAT PROJECT MIGHT BE PUT BACK ON THE TRACK.

3. MOST OF FEBRUARY 22 WAS SPENT IN VISITING INGA DAM AND FLYING OVER PART OF THE INGA-SHABA LINE. THE UNDERSECRETARY RECEIVED BRIEFINGS ON BOTH OF THESE PROJECTS AND PURSUED THE PROBLEM OF FINANCING THE COST OVERRUN ON THE INGA-SHABA LINE. THAT EVENING THE CHARGE HOSTED A RECEPTION WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY KEY ZAIRIANS, AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN, FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND THE COUNTRY TEAM MEMBERS. AFTER THE RECEPTION, BISENGIMANA HOSTED A DINNER FOR THE UNDERSECRETARY AND HIS DELEGATION, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE STABILIZATION COMMISSION. THERE, THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WERE CIEC ISSUES IN GENERAL AND COPPER IN PARTICULAR.

4. THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 23 BEGAN WITH BREAKFAST WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU (SEPTU), FOLLOWED BY A PRIVATE MEETING WITH BISENGIMANA WHERE THE MAIN AREAS OF ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY WERE SUMMARIZED AND WHERE UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON GAVE AN OUTLINE OF THE AREAS WHERE THE US MIGHT BE OF ASSISTANCE. THEN THE ROBINSON PARTY TOOK OFF FOR THE SHABA REGION WHERE THEY VISITED THE SITE OF THE SMTF PROJECT AND THE GECAMINES OPERATION. THENCE TO NORTHEASTERN ZAIRE AND ON TO CAIRO.

5. THE EMBASSY WILL BE FOLLOWING UP BY SEPARATE MESSAGE ON GOZ REQUESTS FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE, BUT WE WANTED TO GET OFF THIS GENERAL APPRECIATION OF HOW WELL UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON'S VISIT HAD GONE. THE TIMING OF THE VISIT WAS PERFECT AND THE MESSAGE OF ASSURANCE THAT UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON BROUGHT WAS EXTREMELY WELL RECEIVED. ON A PERSONAL NOTE--WHICH IS ALWAYS VERY IMPORTANT IN AFRICA--THE ZAIRIANS WERE VERY IMPRESSED BY THE UNDERSECRETARY'S VISION AND THE OBVIOUS UNDER-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINSHA 01633 241515Z

STANDING AND EMPATHY WITH WHICH HE ADDRESSED THIS PROBLEM. THE ENTIRE DELEGATION HAS A STANDING INVITATION TO VISIT ZAIRE AGAIN--SOON.

WALKER

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED.

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